

ΘΕΟΠΕΠΟΤΘΗΣΙΣ:

OR

N^o 17

The Heavenly Confidence.

IN A

SERMON

Preached in the Parish-Church

OF

St. Mary White Chappel,

ON

Sunday, October 28th, 1705.

Publish'd at the Request of several Parishioners; and in
Vindication of it from some *False Aspersions* that have
been thrown against it.

By *R. WELTON*, Rector of the said Parish

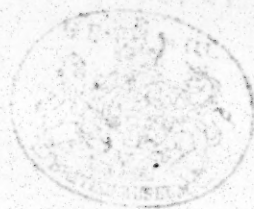
*Then said He unto the Disciples, It is impossible but that Offences
will come: But Wo unto him by whom they come.*

*It were better for him that a Millstone were hanged about his Neck,
and he cast into the Sea—*Mat. 17. 1, 2.

Si sæviat Mundus, si fremat Malignus, &c.

TU ES SPES MEA DOMINE! Bern.

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To Mr. S—ll.

S I R,

YO U may perhaps be somewhat surprized, that upon this Occasion I address you, that are almost a Stranger to me, and, as you tell me, a Dissenter from the Church of England: But, in truth, these are the very Reasons that induc'd me to it: For I desire not the Favour of a Friend, but the Justice of an Impartial Stranger in this case; and I the rather appeal to one of your Perswasion, because, I would convince you that I have really a Regard to the serious and well-designing part among you.

'Tis for your sakes, in a great measure, that I Publish this Discourse, to shew you, in the most Unchristian Usage I have met with upon the account of it, what Impostors there are amongst us.

Indeed I am most absolutely of your Opinion in This, that there are of Both Sides, most pernicious Engines working Breaches and Ill-blood; and therefore I never think of them but with the utmost Contempt and Pity, as the despicablest Miscreants, whose Praises I should abhor, and look upon their good Word as the greatest of my Misfortunes.

As to the following Sermon, I shall leave it wholly to shift for it self, not doubting but as it is extorted from me after the rudest manner, in so much haste, and without my ever having the least thought of communicating it to the World, there will be allowances made, by those that have any Candour or real Moderation,

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ration, for whatever there may be found in it in an Undress.

And when the unbiass'd Reader sees how far the whole Design and Drift of this Discourse is from so much as touching upon State Affairs, or Publick Government, I doubt not but he will compassionate the present Circumstances of the Clergy, who, indeed, may well be supposed to despair, if they cannot be protected from being publicly traduc'd in the most vile and filthy Characters, and so exposed to the Hatred and Fury of the Mob, Only, and without any other Provocation, than for Preaching to their People upon the Noblest Subjects, even such as this was, upon A Divine Confidence and Trust in God.

Alas ! Is it grown a Crime to Vindicate Religion ! We are exposed as Seditious, and Enemies to the Queen, for Hallowing the Sacred Prerogative of the Crown, and Establishing Her Right by the Principles of Religion, as well as State Politicks : But is it an Offence to Vindicate God against Deists and Atheists, by Enforcing the Duty of Relyance upon Him ? Well then may the Ways of Sion mourn, and her Priests lament ; Lam. I. 4.

But it seems there was the word [Princes] in my Text, and this happened at a time when Her Majesty had but just before met both Houses, and consequently must be designed against Her most Gracious Speech, and against the Proceedings of the Present Government. Behold here, what poor Shifts Slander will make, that it may Cavil and Embroil ! Certainly this is the most ridiculous piece of Nonsense that Malice has invented ; 'tis such a Contradiction in it self, that there's no Man of Common Reason or Honesty but

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but must despise it, as I do, and the Authors of it ; for whom I have yet the most extensive Charity, and do entirely desire Him, who is to be their Judge, to pardon and forgive them, whoever they are.

But still this is a piece of Forgery so ill aim'd that it can never penetrate ; such Lead as this must needs fly back to its first soft place : For who knows not that Her Majesty's most Gracious Speech was not in Print 'till the Day after I Preach'd that Sermon ? But had it been the Day before, it cannot be supposed that such a Design could be produc'd, like a Mushroom, in one Night.

But, Sir, to satisfie all Doubts and Jealousies, I will here take leave to tell you, and all the World, what a profound Allegiance I think my self oblig'd to pay to the Queen's Majesty, according to the Principles of that Church, of which, I hope, I am a true Member : And it is quite different from what some of Her Majesty's pretended Friends so publicly Espouse and Preach up in the Reviv'd Doctrine of Resistance and Rebellion ! For, believe me Sir, that were it possible for me to be perswaded, that there could be any thing in that most Comprehensive and Excellent Speech against the Favour of the Church, alas ! I could never appeal unto the People in that Case ; No ! but I should rather lament it in private and before God alone ; and rather wash it out with my Tears ; or, (if it could be) expiate it with my dearest Blood !

And I have more than the common Arguments to prevail with me to this Duty : For I am come out of the Ashes of an Undone Family ; the best part of which Perish'd for their Integrity and Faithfulness to the Crown. Perhaps this will be charg'd upon me as

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an Original Sin, and ex traduce. But no matter for that ; I bless God for it, and glory in it, if it were only upon this account, that I cannot be supposed to degenerate so from my first Principle, as ever knowingly to Consent either to its Trouble or Undermining, and especially now 'tis fixed upon the Sacred Temples of a Queen that has endear'd me, and all good Men, to Her entire Interest ; not only by Her Royal and True Descent, but by Her Unparallel'd and Native Goodness.

There is one Thing more that I would observe, and that is in relation to the Present Government ; for I would be rightly understood by you, and all good Men, particularly in this Point : And I do assure you, Sir, that with all possible Submission and Zeal to Authority, I have Industiously labour'd to Teach and to Persuade my People to be Dutiful and Obedient to the Magistracy in every Ordinance and Dispensation, for the sake of God.

Indeed my chief Business concerning Government, has been to inform them, whom the Providence of God has committed to my Charge, how to govern their own Passions, to infuse into them an healing Spirit, and the Spirit of Truth, Unity, and Concord ; and that, not by an immoderate and giddy Zeal to frighten them as, they say, some do sometimes into Despair, by thundering out Anathema's, and Reprobation, against them. No ; but by the most soft and gentle Methods that I have been able to contrive to win them to their Duty, and enamour them with Good.

And, I bless God, I have Thousands in my Parish that can, and will testifie, on Occasion, how earnestly I have press'd these Duties upon them ; how often I
have

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have in Publick urg'd the great necessity of not differing in our Affections, however in some Things we may happen to differ in our Judgments.

And 'tis with an unspeakable Satisfaction that I rejoyce in the Success of my Labours and Concern for them; that I behold constantly in my Church, a Congregation increased by some of them, who heretofore, through Prejudice of Education, or some other unhappy Mistakes, have thought it a Sin to come within those Walls; and that at my Monthly Sacrament I can see such happy numbers of Communicants, and Administer the Sacred Pledges to about Five Hundred at one time.

These are the Demonstrations what my Conversation has been among them; and I must own, to do them Justice, that I have no reason to complain of an undutiful or disaffectionate Return from them; but I have alwayes met with a most kind and generous Respect, such as has raised me above the reach of unjust Obloquy, and vile ill-natur'd Defamation.

This I shall ever look upon as the greatest Blessing of my Life; and Blessed God continue me but the Hearts and Affections of my People, 'tis all I crave for my most faithful Ministrations, which neither Devils, nor the Ill Designs of Wicked Men, shall be ever able to pervert or interrupt.

There are some Tempers that are implacable, and never to be wone or wrought upon without a Miracle: God grant that Miracle upon them, that when we shall one time meet together before our Judge, we may behold each others Faces with Joy, in that one place where all Fars and Discords shall for ever cease.

Thus

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Thus have I, without Reserve, us'd a Freedom with you, which I hope will not be disagreeable, especially in that it is without Hypocrisie, and sordid Dissimulation; for I have observed in you, in our last (and indeed in our first and only) Conversation, an Ingenuous Disposition to an open Integrity and plain Dealing. This is the most generous way of Converse, and very valuable wherever it is found.

And as to those private Locusts, who come out of the dark to destroy the Fruit, they are, as I take it, the vilest part of the Creation, and not worth the Thoughts of a Man, nor any part of his Breath; 'tis my Resolution they shall have no share in mine, only in my Breathings to Almighty God, if it be possible, for their Conversion.

I am, SIR,

Your Hearty Well-wisher,

and Humble Servant,

R. Welton.

P S A L. cxlvj. 3, 5.

O put not your trust in Princes, nor in the
Son of Man, in whom there is no help.

Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for
his help: and whose hope is in the Lord
his God.

THIS Psalm, as some believe, was Com-^{vid. B. Ely in}
posed by *David*, as an Exhortation and ^{loc.}
Incitement to the People, to sing Praises
and Hallelujahs to God, from the Consi-
deration of several of the Divine Excellencies which
make Him the proper Object of our Confidence,
in all the Circumstances and Conditions of our
Lives.

In the 118th Psalm he seems to sing much in the
same Strain, in that Panegyrick Hymn which he
Composed, as 'tis generally thought, after his In-
stallment to the Kingdom; after he had overcome
his Enemies the *Philistines*, recovered the Ark of
God from them, and settled it in the Place which
he had before prepared for it. In which the Royal
Prophet having set the Psalm, *O give Thanks unto* ^{1 Chron. 16.8.}
the Lord, and call upon his Name, make known his
wondrous Deeds among the People, &c. that it might
be sung in a more full and mellow Choir, he calls
upon them all, all that had an Interest in the glad
Occasion, to lend a Voice, and joyn with him their
King in making up the sacred Chorus, *Let Israel*
B now

- Psa'. 118. 2. *now say that his Mercy endureth for ever ; and let the holy Tribe, the Priests and Levites, or in his*
 Ver. 3. *own words, O let the House of Aaron now confess that his Mercy endureth for ever : And then having exhorted others, he proceeds more warmly to excite himself, and be inflam'd into the Zealous Practice of the same Praise and Gratitude to God, by commemorating his Benefits to his Royal Self ; I*
 Ver. 5. *called, says he, upon the Lord in my distress : the Lord answered me, and set me in a large place. For which Reflection on God's former Goodness to him, he there takes heart, resolving what to do hereafter ; The Lord is on my side, I will not fear what Man can do unto me : The Lord taketh my part with them that help me ; therefore shall I see my desire upon them that hate me. And to confirm himself in these his Resolutions, he happily layes down a*
 Ver. 6, 7. *Practical Conclusion ; It is better to trust in the Lord, then to put confidence in Man. It is better to trust in the Lord, then to put confidence in Princes.*

Here in my Text he seems more Emphatically to express himself, though to the same purpose, There is no State of Man in which we may rationally confide, no, not even in the most Powerful and Mighty, who are no more than Men, whose Breath is in their Nostrils ; and therefore,

O put not your trust in Princes, nor in the Son of Man, in whom there is no help : But,

Happy is the Man that hath the God of Jacob for his help, and whose hope is in the Lord his God.

Hope and Fear are what are known to guide and to determine, and like two wings convey the Soul in all its motions ; which, if they move not uniform

form and equal, keeping a true Ballance, and poising it direct towards the same Point, obstruct the progress of the Mind that it must necessarily cease.

The Royal Prophet therefore having before fix'd resolutely, *I will not fear what Man can do unto me.* Thus having remov'd his Fear from all inferiour Objects, he effectually determines where to lodge his Hope ; *It is better to trust in the Lord, &c.* And so in this place, *Happy is the Man that hath the God of Jacob for his help, and whose hope is in the Lord his God.*

Which words being a Practical Inference of this Great Man, I shall not here trouble you with any other Gloss upon them: only I will endeavour to make out the bare Importance of them, as they lye before us in a naked Proposition, That the Happiness of a Man depends upon his Trust and Confidence in God above all other Things.

Now this I shall endeavour to prove by these two Mediums.

First, From the Consideration of the Promises that God has given us. And,

Secondly, From the Properties of God himself.

First, It is happy for that Man whose Hope is in the Lord his God, because the Promises of God are more large, indefinite and absolute, than they can be in the Son of Man ; and all Human Promises on the other hand are made with more Exceptions, and many ways and methods of Reserve-ment and Evasion.

* Seneca.

'Tis the part of a Wise Man, sayes * one, to promise nothing without Exception, and then this Exception must regulate and limit his Performance; and the weakness of this Promise will appear from hence, that these Exceptions seldom are expressed; as it appears by the Instance of the same Moralist a little after, who thus explains himself; *Promisi beneficium, nisi si quid incidisset quare non deberem dare*: I gave my word, sayes he, to do my Friend that Good, unless somewhat extraordinary should intervene and so prevent me. So limited are Human Promises that there is little, very little, or no dependance to be made upon them.

Turk. Hist.

Solomon the Magnificent promis'd *Ebrahim Bassa*, his Privado and chief Favourite, that he would never hurt him so long as he liv'd; yet when he afterwards grew jealous of his Practices, suspecting that 'twas he that had, from some Correspondence with the States of *Christendom*, diverted his Attempts against the Christians to a War against the *Persians* that prov'd disadvantageous, he commanded him to be Murder'd in his Sleep to save his Promise.

Baker's Chron.

And it were happy if this like Treachery were but confin'd to *Turkey* only. If Christians had not learn'd the same or worse evading Methods to break and to dissolve all those strict Obligations which either the most solemn Promises, Professions and Vows, or even the most sacred Oaths or Tests can fasten on them, then had not *Henry* the Third, whose Memory is Famous and Recorded by it, after he had Thrice so solemnly Sworn to observe the Capitulations agreed on with his Barons, as often broke them under the Pretence and seeming Sanctuary

ctuary of a Popish Dispensation. So little Trust and Confidence is rationally to be reposed in any Human Tyes or ever so strict Engagements, though fortified by the most solemn Obligations whatsoever.

But God uses not these Shifts and Subterfuges to elude his Word : He is often better but never worse than what his Promises assure. They indeed are *confirmed with Oaths made by himself, because he has no greater to swear by*, and therefore cannot be dispensed withal ; for He has no superiour to dispense with Him from the Observation and Performance of them.

Besides, as all Human Promises are more flight and treacherous as to present Performances, so are they no less short and contract in respect to future. And in this respect the Greatest and most Powerful of Men must necessarily fall short. A Prince may promise to a Favourite his own Gracious Aspect, and may continue it unto his Life's end : But alas ! he cannot engage or secure one that his Grand-Child shall favour the Posterity of the other.

A very remarkable Instance of which Truth we have in *Joseph*, by whose Discretion, Foresight and Providence, the *Egyptians* were deliver'd from the Danger of a Seven Years Famine : For this the *Israelite* was taken into mighty Favour, such as to become able to provide for all his Relations, and to maintain the numerous Offspring of his whole Family ; and all this lasted too during the whole Life of that King.

But when he was dead, then, alas ! the Case was quite another thing ; things ran wholly different, and alter'd then, and the Golden Scene was changed ;

ged ; and these late Favourites were now become the publick Vassals ; for so it was, that *there arose up a new King that knew not Joseph* : No, he took no Notice of any Promise that might be made by him that was before him, neither did he remember the Benefits of *Joseph*, *Exod. i. 8.*

But now the Promises of God to *Abraham* were far otherwise ; and the Blessing was Entail'd upon his Posterity, continuing the Succession of so many Generations, according to God's own Character that He vouchsafes to give us of Himself, even that He is *a God shewing Mercy unto thousands, unto the third and fourth Generation.*

2 Sam. 7. 18,
19. The Royal Prophet, under a true Sense and Notion of this Truth, when God had promised that he would settle the Kingdom on the Line of *David*, reflects upon't as a Promise worthy of the alone Majesty of God. He could but wonder and admire at that Divine Providence that had to that Time preserv'd his House and Family, and carry'd him through all those Difficulties and Dispensations that he had met with. But when he considered what was to come to him still, this sent him into the Presence of God, and made him in that Rapture to cry out, *And yet this was but a small thing in thy sight, O Lord ! But thou hast spoken also of thy servants house for a great while to come ; and is this the manner of Man, O Lord God ?* Intimating thereby, that it is not the manner of Man, whose Nature and Capacity in its most able sense, extends his Promises no farther, nor can extend them farther, than the mere limits of his own duration.

Ibid.

But

But *Secondly*, The Happiness of a Man depends upon his Trust and Confidence in God. And this will appear from the Consideration of the Divine Properties. And,

1. In respect of God's Goodness. He that can propose Relief, or expect to reap Supply for his Necessities and Wants from Human Goodness, as well may such a one expect to quench his Thirst even from the Morning Dew : *For all human goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goes away*, Hof. 6. 4.

'Tis God that is the Original and the Fountain of all Goodness ; of which whatever is in Man, is but communicated and deriv'd from God, and when receiv'd, 'tis generally allay'd with Human Evil : For should we but survey the brightest Form of Human Goodness, and found it in the most natural Channel in which it seems to flow most freely, we shall find it to proceed in so very small a Stream, as what soon, and upon the least occasion, will be evaporated and dried up.

Certainly if Human Goodness has any Current that may be presumed to be deep and lasting, it must be in that Affection which passes betwixt Parents and their Children : But if we found this, we shall find it so very shallow as that it will bear no Vessels of Burden, no Weight or Lading of Confidence and Trust.

(1.) Then let us examine it in its ascending Channel, even from Children to their Parents : And alas ! will not their Deportment justify all the Complaints and Lamentations of the other ? What inconsiderable poor Returns do Parents reap for their Affection, their Care and their continual Expence ?

Are

Are not their Admonitions and Reproofs, their Pious Exhortations and Corrections, (the most excellent Donatives of Parents, those incomparable Portions which are made by Nature equally communicable unto all without exception, without the Prelacy or Distinction of Primogeniture, and unto which all are equally born Heirs, yet) are not these, I say, received with Stubbornness and Obstinacy, with Disobedience, and oft-times with Rebellion?

Gen. 9. 22. Has not *Ham* long ago proclaim'd and publish'd his own Shame to all Posterity, even by discovering the Nakedness of his Father? And has not *Esau* comforted himself with the malicious and too hasty Meditation that the days of Mourning for his Fa-

* *Filius ante diem Patris inquiri in Annos.*

ther were at hand? Gen. 27. * Have not the very Heathens express'd their apprehensions of this Grievance? And did not *Absalom* express as much Impiety in his importunate pursuit of his Father's Life and Kingdom, and in the detestable Pollution of his Bed from which himself was sprung, as his Royal Father did an Aged Fondness in his sad Complaint, and the bewailing of his Death? 2 Sam. 16. Was not *Sennacherib* Murder'd by his own Sons, and offer'd up the Bloody Victim to their Unnatural Cruelty, even while he was Worshiping in the Temple of his God?

2 Chron 32. 21.

And that we may behold how little the World is mended in this respect by the succession of Ages; was not King *Henry* the Second, for a great part of his Reign, distracted by Unjust and Civil Wars? Of which all his own Three Sons were the chief Incendiaries, and prime Leaders; which made his Majesty complain to some that were about him: See, says he, how I am persecuted by my own Bowels!

Behold

Behold then how Ingratitude is, ordinarily speaking, the sole Interest return'd by Children, even unto those to whom they are indebted for, and owe their very Being ; so very little Goodness reigns between the nearest in Relation and by Nature : And if a Father can't repose a Confidence in his own Bowels ; if Parents, I say, can't confide nor trust in *those*, who have nothing but what they receive from them ; and if the Child which should be the Staff of his Fathers Age, is oftentimes turn'd into the forest Rod, O what then, or in what sort of Men may Confidence be placed, to free Gray Hairs from falling down with Sorrow to the Grave!

But possibly it may be, as some tell us, that Human Love is a kind of Fire that moves most naturally downward, as other Sparks fly upward ; that like the Sun warms most in its descent.

Thus then let us discover it in its descending Stream, and as it flowes from Parents to their Children ; and then see how little Trust or Confidence may be reposed even also in this Relation.

If the Historical Account of *Romulus* be true, was not a Wolf much more affectionate than a Natural Parent ? Or, if this or that of *Medea* be fabulous and uncertain, yet still does the common practice of the World proclaim the Rigour and Unnatural Severity among Parents ? How many Princes Courts hath Jealousie brought into Desolation, and the contentious Rivality of a Throne how has it made Parents to become the cruel Authors of their own Childrens Deaths ?

In the *Ottoman* Court we know, that the Grand Seignieur, out of a vehement, yet customary, Fear of State, sometimes Strangles all his Children, but the Eldest ; but most commonly removes all his Male Children, so soon as they are grown up, to the remotest Provinces of his Empire, whom they scarce ever see again : So that there Distance and the Bow-string are deem'd the only Antidotes, the most usual Preservations, against the Infectious Maladies of that Court's Jealousies.

And it seems to intimate somewhat like to this, what the Royal Psalmist hinteth in these words ; *When my Father and my Mother forsook me, the Lord took me up*, Psal. 27. 10. For though perhaps he was not in this Sense Literally forsaken by his Parents, but deserted only by the necessary Divorce of Death ; yet his words seem to imply a possibility of it ; and he himself most sensibly complains of it in another place, in regard of all the Relations that he had, *My Lovers*, says he, *and my Friends stood looking on my Trouble at a distance, and my Kinsmen stood afar off*. Such are the greatest Reasons of our Confidence in Man, even under the most Sacred Tyes, and Natural and most Endearing Obligations !

But with God it is not thus : For the Divine Affection is more permanent and stable ; and there is none so much a Father, none so much a Friend, none so to be trusted or so ready to assist in time of Trouble, and in the Prophet's Notion, none that is so loath and unwilling to forget as He is : *Can a Woman forget her sucking Child, that she should not have Compassion on the Son of her Womb : Yea, they*

they do forget, yet I will not forget thee saith the Lord God. But,

2. It is the Happiness of a Man to put entire Confidence in God, not only in respect of his Goodness, but his Almighty Power also : And alas ! with what Security can any Confidence be reposed in Man, a weak frail Mortal, and such an impotent and dying Creature ! whose most importunate Attempts oftner are cross'd and disappointed, than happy or crown'd with Success ; all which, if any may be expected, yet depends entirely upon God's Disposal.

If Balak would give me his house full of Silver and Gold, I cannot go beyond the Word of the Lord my God, to do less or more, was the Confession of Balaam before a King : And he certainly that could not transgress his Commission in speaking of a Word, could he, think we, act any thing prejudicial to that People whose Protection God himself had undertaken ? Numb. 22. 28.

Would it not be deem'd the grossest kind of Ignorance and Stupidity, to rely more upon an Officer inferiour, limited and circumscrib'd by his Commission, than on the General, the Prince or Sovereign, that is absolute and independent, and whom all the rest besides do homage to and obey ? It is no less a Folly, an Instance of the same Infatuation, to put Relyance upon Man, a private and an inconsiderable part of Nature, more than upon God, the Great Original of Power and Might, the Universal Monarch of the whole World.

How

How mean, alas, and how ridiculous is the utmost Jurisdiction that the vainest Man can pretend to? To see a *Canutus* dress'd in his most Royal Danish Robes, plac'd upon his Throne; and then Imperiously chide the Sea when it grows rough and boisterous. Alas! How in vain did that *Canutus* chide, as if his Breath would have made the Waves retire! Which still continued their Inundation 'till they wash'd his Robes, and made him to dislodge with all his Royal Ensigns: Or, to see a *Xerxes* casting his Fetters into the Ocean, threatening to shackle its insulting Billows, yet the same Waters will in three days time rebel and swallow up, and drown all his discomfited Battalions.

This is the vain Foundation of all Human Trust; for it is God alone that rules the raging of the Sea, that maketh *the Waters stand on an heap, that Israel may go through*; that hath all Nature stooping at his Word: 'Tis He alone that can say, as the Centurion to his Servant, to one Element go, and it goeth, and to another come and it cometh, and to a third do this, and it doth it; that can say unto a Mountain, be thou removed, and it shall come to pass, and at whose Word *the Heavens and the Earth shall melt away*. When he commands, *the Stars shall fight against Sisera in their Courses*, and to perform his Will, *The Hail from Heaven shall destroy the Cattel of the Egyptians*: And more of the *Amonites shall fall by the arrest of Hailstones, than by the keen pursuit of the Israelitish Swords*.

Thus we read how the very Winds, when summoned by the Prayers of that Christian Legion, retorted back the Darts of the Roman Infidels upon

Judg. 5. 20.

Exod. 9. 18,
19.

Josh. 10. 11.

upon their own Bodies : A Passage so miraculous, that *Claudian* himself could not forbear the mention of it in these words ;

*Hec nimium dilecte Deo cui militat Æther,
Et conjurati veniunt ad classica Venti.*

O, says he, thou Christian Emperour ! Thou art too great a Favourite of thy God ! What Charm is there in that Cross upon thy Standard, that it should thus compel the Stars, and Heaven it self, to fight thy Cause, and call the very Winds to answer the Alarms of your Trumpets ! So operative and effectual are Second Causes, when managed and applyed by Him who is the First, the Principal and Omnipotent Original of them all.

Otherwise and without his *Fiat*, as there is no relief in any of them, so therefore is there no trusting, no assurance in them : *If Israel will lean upon the Staff of Egypt*, it shall be so far from *Israel's* Support, that it shall pierce his hand : *If Asa sends to the Physicians first*, and sooner seeks to them than unto God, whatever they administer shall work no Cure, and end in nothing else but Death : So impotent and weak are Second Causes in themselves, that to depend upon them would but be at best, to trust unto a broken Reed, and, like *Ixion*, to embrace a Cloud. But,

3. It is happier to trust in God than to put Confidence in the Son of Man ; because of his immense and unfathomable Wisdom. It was the Destruction of the Rebellious *Absalom*, the Ruin of him-

E

self

self and the Undoing of his Party, merely his depending on the Wisdom and the Counsel of *Achitophel*. He trusted, 'tis true, to a very Politick and Cunning States-man ; but alas ! he wanted the Direction and Guidance of Him who maketh *the Wisdom of the Wise to be turned into Folly, and the Crafty to be taken in their own Devices* ; and then no wonder that it should be as the Wise Man tells us, *That there is one end to the Wise and to the Fool*.

But it is the sole Prerogative of God to be Omniscient, to foresee Events, and to look before into the Results and Consequences of all Human Actions ; and therefore he can never be at a loss for Means to finish and effect the Ends and Purposes he has designed : He oftentimes discerns the most harmonious congruity and excellent proportion, even betwixt those very Things which Human Reasoning would judge most opposite, and extremely contrary to one another.

Thus who would have believ'd a Dungeon the fittest place and nearest step to *Joseph's* Honour and Preferment ? Who could have imagined that a Fiery Furnace, or a Den of Lions, or a Spear in *Cæsar's* Side, were the most proper Instruments and Means unto the Welfare, Happiness and Advancement of those Blessed Children, of that Sacred Prophet, or of *Cæsar* ?

But God that could foresee the happy Consequences of these Adventures, hallowed these Miracles unto the Glory of the Unbounded and Unsearchable Wisdom ; that we might learn from hence to trust and to confide in him alone, to fix

our whole Dependance on that Almighty Providence, which is for ever waking and guarding them that faithfully believe. These Sacred Instances of the deepest Wisdom are recorded in Holy Writ, to inflame us with a Divine Zeal, and teach us to Bless and to Adore his Holy Name ; to see the vast disproportion between all Human Aid and his ; and therefore to despise all other in respect of it : To know our best Support, and to be constantly endeavouring to build our Faith upon this Rock, even the Rock of our Salvation.

It is related, somewhere, as I remember, of Cardinal *Woolsey*, that being desperately sick, as he was journeying to Court upon the Summons of the King ; and I think he dyed in his Journey : But one, to comfort him, assur'd him, that questionless he would find his Majesty a Gracious Master : *Oh !* says he, *had I but served God as faithfully as I have serv'd the King, He would not have forsaken me now-I am old.*

And would but we believe and trust in God in the same measure as we place our dependances in Men, He never would baffle nor delude our Hopes, He never would disappoint us in so gross a manner, as they whom we most confide in in all our Worldly Matters but too often do.

Nay, the very Will and Disposition, the very Act of Trust in God, would be an unspeakable Reward, even in its own Nature : For let us but look on Faith even in the meanest of its Offices, I mean as it disposes us to a trusting of God with our Temporal Concerns and Welfare, and to a full Submission to the Will and Wisdom of Almighty God ;

God ; or as it does confirm us in a Resolution and Assurance that God can choose better for us than we can for our selves ; and that whatever he thinks fit to dispense concerning us, whether his hottest or most bitter Potion, that still all this is fittest for our present State, and especially for our future Good ; and therefore is more eligible, more to be desired by us than any thing that we could have ask'd or prayed for.

I say, would we but thus confide in God, even in these the smallest Instances of our Faith, what a present Reward would this be to us even while we sojourn in this World ! What an Heavenly Beatitude and Blessed State of Rest would such a noble Confidence as this create in a Man's Mind ! O what a Sabbath would this be ! What a Security from all that Servile Work, those horrid Perjury's and base and vile Submissions, which wicked and designing Men drudge under ! How would this secure a Man's Integrity and Uprightness, even under the severest Tryals and Dispensations whatsoever ! So that *though the Earth were shaken, and the Hills were carried to the midst of the Sea ; Si fractus illabatur Orbis, impavidum ferient ruinae :* Though Heaven and Earth should flee away, and Nature should be jumbled into a Dissolution, none of these Things would be able to undermine this Christian Confidence ; for all such sacred Resolutions stand strong ; they stand upon a Basis that can never fail, and in the Psalmist's words, *such a Man his Feet stand fast, his Heart is fixed* trusting

trusting in the Lord, which no Region of Meteors can be able to disquiet.

And when we lift our Thoughts on high, when we cast our Eyes above our Heads, looking upon the Sacred Object of our Faith and Trust; when we behold and see Him as *

The Fountain and Original of all Good, as the Creator of the

* Tu Vita & Genitor Vitæ Lucisq; procul
In Lux vera Deus — Mar. Victor.

World and of Mankind, as the Life of every Created Being, as that God that Created the Brightness of the Sun, in whom is the Light of Angels, and the Shine of Truth; when we look upon God as the perpetual Support and Glory of the Universe; O what is there that can take our Eyes off from being fix'd for ever upon this Brightness! And what a sorry, pitiful Amusement is it to fix a Trust or Confidence on any thing but God!

Let us fall down before his Foot-stool! Let us prostrate our selves before him, and adore the God of our Salvation! Owning our Dependance on his Goodness; committing our selves wholly to his Providence and Protection: For then, in spite of wicked Men and Devils, we shall be safe.

And the Good God in whom we Trust, (and unto whom should we flee for Succour but to Him) be Merciful unto us, and Bless us, and be our Defence and Guide unto Death! that when we rest from our Labours, of our Faith that can never dye, may be swallowed up in Victory, and waft us to

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that

that Sacred Place of Joy, which is the Inheritance of them that Believe, through Jesus Christ our Blessed Saviour : To whom with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be for ever ascribed as is most due, all Honour, and Glory, and Praise, Might, Majesty, and Dominion. *Amen.*

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